

HURRICANE HAZARD

Entry No. 26 in Our Prize Story Competition

BY CHARLES FRANCIS BOURKE



"O you'd join the Life, would you, Master Hurricane Hazard?" Big Casco, Captain of Ships Bottom Life Saving Station, squared his great jaw in a way that, to the experienced eyes of the burly surfmen, his confreres and prototypes, loitering near the little spar topped station, boded ill for the straight, upstanding young fellow who faced him there on the inhospitable sands.

"Forby you're mistaking the crew for benchcombers," Casco went on with grim sarcasm. "It's a beach-comber you're branded, like your grandfather before ye, Old Hurricane that the children of Barnegat Village

hooted for a wrecker and looter of lost ships! I judge no man; but this I say, The beach is long and the course open to you; but, stay or go, remember this, my man, that none who bears the name of Hurricane Hazard has aught to do with kin or crew of Jem Casco's!"

A little pale, perhaps, but self-contained and motionless as a penjaeketed statue in son'wester and seaboots, Young Hazard took the terrible arraignment as a man should, braced for it, straight from the shoulder as it came.

He could not blame the big life Captain. In the few months since Old Hurricane's death Hazard had discovered much of the truth of Casco's words. Before that, during his boyhood, along with his grandfather, he had given little thought to the latter's nefarious calling; for the fierce old man had kept the youngster aloof from all but his more or less legitimate operations.

Now, within a short space of time, ambition had really come—with his first meeting with Molly Barnes. Casual as their acquaintance was, of necessity, since she came from the Far West to make her home with her sister, Captain Casco's wife, it had kindled a train of forceful purpose and determination. Seafaring blood was his heritage. The smartest boatman on Barnegat Bay, he gravitated naturally to the Life Saving Service,—anyway, as a stepping stone to better things, with the Revenue Service maybe as his goal. Then it had come home to Hazard that, guilty or not, requital had fallen on him: with opportunity before him to carve out his own career, he was blocked at the outset by a record of ill deeds, not of his making, but no less drastic in their aftermath.

Even as Casco spoke, it all flashed through his mind. As the big life saver turned away with a shrug of his massive shoulders, Hazard spoke, quietly as he had received the stroke of fate.

"You mean I'm not to see Molly—Miss Barnes—again?"

Casco swung on him savagely. "My wife's sister is not for such as you! I've told her why. And you I've warned—now go!" He stalked indoors, and Hazard, inwardly raging, faced the open beach.

MORE than one weatherbeaten life saver looked sympathetically after the straight young form striding away over the sand hillocks, making for the solitary cabin down shore, where he could eat out his heart undisturbed.

Little Welsh, sprawled in the doorway of the station, engaged in splicing a length of line, grunted contemptuously. "Jem made a bad break—sendin' Miss Molly down south with the Missus. Enough to make 'im sore! Cap didn't think o' young hearts growin' fonder from absence, like the poet says."

In the station watchtower three bells struck. Preacher Bronson glanced up the beach, where Casco with his binoculars was anxiously watching to the southward, where clouds banked black.

"Cap's still on the lookout, like a hen what's lost her chicks. That's what's give us all the dumps—Cap mouchin' round waitin' for his folks like there was a bloomin' West Injy hurricane comin'."

"Most time that old windjammer Nancy Lee came pushin' up shore," Welsh said casually. "Next time Jem gives us all the mollygrubs by making of hisself a bloomin' bachelor, along o' separatin' two loving young hearts, I'm goin' to resign pro tem an' turn beach-comber myself."

He gathered up his mended rope, and Bronson climbed the ladder to relieve the lookout on watch. Only Casco clung to his place on the sand hillock, gazing to the south, whence in time the schooner Nancy Lee would come bowling out of the smother with all he held dear on board; including Miss Molly Barnes, whose image filled the heart of a disconsolate young boatman in son'wester and penjaeked who at that precise moment sat in the stern of a sloop, steering blindly out to sea. The loitering Ships Bottom crew saw him, and nodded solemn nods.

"Good for him if he keeps goin'—an' fergets to come back!" remarked the scoffing Welsh. "An' us! Cap's sure a Tartar wen things ain't goin' his way."

WHETHER or not Hurricane Hazard's departure from the scene was a good thing, at four bells a flutter of white sails down coast flitted across the lens of Captain Casco's marine glasses.

"It's the Nancy Lee—know her from that moon patch on her fores'l," Casco announced, his weatherbeaten face lighting in a smile that momentarily lifted the gloom of the whole station.

The crew, exchanging grins, sighed with relief.

"We'll run out and head her off, and take off the girls an' the kid," Casco said. "It'll say 'em going up to Toms River and coming back by rail," he added as the men spun the white lifeboat down the sandstrip into the surf.

There was another reason for the maneuver that Casco did not speak of. The men saw for themselves. As the Nancy Lee scudded head on for the waiting lifeboat, her patched canvas showed against a murky, thickening background. A black squall was following the Nancy Lee, overhauling her haul over list, despite the frothing "bone" she carried in her teeth.

"It'll hit her about here, jest when we board her!" a man whispered.

A louder murmur followed on the heels of the prophecy, and a man swore under his breath.

"By Jim! Old Man Bunker must be crazy!" he cried. "The squall's on him, an' he's not taking a rag off her! It'll drive him under! There's something wrong!"

Something was wrong with the schooner, that was sure. Deserted of crew and officers as far as the Ships Bottom boatmen could see, the little black hulled coaster came booming up shore with every stitch of canvas set, and dangerously yawing, first to starboard, then to port. It was as if a child were at the wheel of a runaway ship, lacking strength to hold a steady course. From side to side she rolled, her sails bellying and flattening, the booms swinging dangerously high as she fell off from the wind and swung back again.

The little schooner was almost upon the lifeboat lying directly in her path, as she came howling down on them. They could see her deck now. And—

"By Jim! They ain't nobody at the wheel! She's empty!" Welsh cried from the bow. Then in a shrill scream, "Men, her flag's capsized—ensign's stars down! Flag o' distress!"

Casco, standing high on the thwarts, caught the flutter of a woman's dress far aft, as the deck of the schooner inclined to leeward; over the cabin roof he saw an upflung, penjaeketed arm, with a shimmer of brass buttons, waving feebly from alongside the wheel.

"It's Bunker, hurt and down!" He shuddered at thought of what that might mean. "That's Molly in the cabin hatchway! What in Heaven's name—"

"Sheer off, Jem—for God's sake! She'll smash us!"

The cry came an instant too late. Even as Casco flung all his strength into the long steering sweep, striving to sheer the lifeboat out of the schooner's path, the squall struck. She fell off suddenly. Her bowsprit and knifelike prow, poised high over their heads, fell with a grinding smash, slicing the white lifeboat in two as if she was made of paper.

In the turning of a hand the two sections of the boat and the struggling life savers, swept far out from the schooner's sides by the rush of water, were left floundering astern. But the Nancy Lee did not swerve from her headlong course. The ocean juggernaut had sighted another victim. Grinning murder, she bore down on him.

YOUNG HURRICANE HAZARD, driving his sloop farther and farther into the tumbling Atlantic, had troubles of his own, which, in a man of less balance and determination, would banish all thought of passing events on beach or bellow far from his thoughts.

After the tongue lashing he had taken from Casco, he had put out to sea mechanically, with something as near hopelessness in his heart as he had known in the comparatively short space of his life, and, curiously enough, with the same thought working in him that Life Saver Welsh had voiced on the beach at Ships Bottom.

"Why not keep on going?" There was no mortal reason why he should return to the empty cabin on the bay shore. His sole possessions he had with him—the sloop, a double-barreled duck gun which lay on the thwart beside him, and the clothes he wore; nothing else but—his love for Molly Barnes.

Gloomily he stared onshore, where the white lifeboat was putting off to intercept the Nancy Lee, now looming large in the south. Easy to see through Casco's game!

"He's going to transship the missus and kid and Molly, so I won't get a chance to see her at Toms River when the schooner gets in—if she ever does! What in thunder's wrong with old Bunker's ship?"

He too saw the squall following the Nancy Lee; but Skipper Bunker had the reputation of being weather-wise as an old gray mule. That didn't bother him.

With his skilful handling, it would be an easy matter to work the sloop down for a last glimpse of the girl he loved, when Casco took her off. But Hazard hesitated. He was a sailor, with full knowledge about coasting schooners, and the erratic handling of the Nancy Lee puzzled him. Still, no thought of impending danger occurred to him. It was only the schooner's queer actions.

"Most likely short handed, with half the crew off board," he speculated. Then he cried out in dismay.

He saw the runaway schooner strike the lifeboat, and the flutter-



"Man to Man!" Roared Hazard.

ing flag at her gaff, the reversed ensign, signal of distress the world over. He crouched over the tiller, hugging the wind as he pounded down into the path of the oncoming vessel, just as Ships Bottom had done. It was his turn now! Grimly he faced it.

"She's run Casco down, and she'll run me down, that ship in distress! I may be a beachcomber; but I bet I make her, if those Life muckers couldn't!"

He was facing death; but he wasted no time in idle speculations. There was trouble aboard the Nancy Lee, or she wouldn't keep her crazy course after spilling the Ships Bottom crew in the sea. They were safe enough. He could see them in the water, far astern now, hanging to the wrecked lifeboat, buoyed up by their cork jackets and the boat's air tanks. Hazard gave them only a glance; his thoughts were all of Molly aboard a ship that was having her own sweet will of the sea, with nobody in sight to direct her.

"If she hits me bow on, she'll fling me off like she did the Ships Bottom bunch. I got to take her broadside. Her booms will yank me under by the mast; but I'll have a show to jump her."

He figured coolly on his chances of jumping the balt-ing ship, from his tossing, rundown sailboat. Not for nothing had Young Hurricane Hazard gained the name of the best boatman on Barnegat Bay. He was like as a panther too, and life on the beach had given him a panther's muscles of tempered steel. He'd make it, or—

"Last minute I'll heave the grapple into her fore-chains, swing her, and jump. Here she comes! And a half-gale after her!"

One thing was in his favor: the squall brought with it a weight of wind that steadied the schooner on her course, filling her patched sails to cracking, as she came bowling up on the little sloop, scudding headily down to meet her.

The high bowsprit loomed over his head like a club. A shrill scream coming from aft on the schooner nerved him to utmost effort. He sprang up, ramming down the tiller as the big sails blanketed him from the wind. Then came the crash.

NECK and neck—and the last jump does it!" A grinding of spars overhead, and the boat, caught by overhanging cordage, plunged downward, sinking under his feet; but Hazard was already scrambling up the forechains like a cat.

A fierce howling and pounding—sounds such as he had never heard from the throats of white men—at his very elbow made him jump, his heart in his mouth. He glanced around. The doors of the fore-castle, whence the unearthly howling proceeded, were nailed and battened down, and brown splashes which were not paint stained the deck at his feet. Sailor that he was, the truth flashed upon him. This was no ship that had broken moorings with the crew offshore! He knew Captain Bunker's fame as a crew driver!

"Mutiny, by thunder! Old Bunker's got in a row with the crew and bottled 'em below. That's the flag of distress business. But where is he?"

Eerie as the schooner's course was, Hazard knew somebody must have the wheel, out of sight behind the deckhouse. As he sprang aft he caught the flash of a frightened face in the cabin window. Captain Casco's wife! He rounded the cabin and gave a cry of relief.

"Molly! Thank Heaven! What's come of Captain Bunker? Deal?"

"Oh, Mr. Hazard! There was a fight! The negro crew ran loose! Oh, and we ran down the lifeboat—I saw it!"

It was the girl he sought, white faced and sobbing, clinging in the doorway of the cabin hatch. Near her, half sitting, half sprawling, in the companionway, lay the bulky form of Skipper Bunker of the Nancy Lee, his leg swathed in bandages, his red face bruised and swollen, his big red hands clutching the spokes of the wheel, and at his side an ugly black automatic pistol.

"You just come in time, Lard," Bunker growled. "I saw you, after Jem Casco missed me. I'm done up—sprained ankle—no sleep—the blacks rushed me!"

At Norfolk his crew had left him, sailing for Panama on an offer of a big paying venture. Bunker let them go, signing in their places a quartet of Jamaica negroes to work the schooner home. That was his fatal mistake.

"They got at the supplies, then smoked I-talians, and quit work. And—we had an argument," Bunker explained. "I battened the black devils in the fo'c'sle, thinking o' the women's safety. A day an' a night I been froze to the wheel. Couldn't heave to without hands, and couldn't see much ahead without the gal here. H'isted the help flag an' let her run!"

YOUNG HURRICANE cut short the Captain's creakings, swinging on the half hysterical girl, who was bab-

bling of Casco and the wrecked lifeboat. He knew the schooner's peril, if Bunker didn't. He was in command now, with the spirit of mastery leaping in him against hopeless odds. The joy of fight thrilled him. So his old grandfather had dared stress and storm.

"Go below—Miss Barnes," he said. "I've got to close the hatch. The cabin's safe, all right, isn't it?"

She nodded, choking with sobs.

"Well, so's Captain Casco and his men. Pull up now, Girl!" he added sternly. "We've got our work cut out for us, Captain Bunker and me. You'll have to do your share, looking after your sister. There's no danger—I'll have the ship home in a jiffy. Only so as I say!"

The quick flash of her brown eyes thrilled him. But this was no time for fooling about girls' eyes! He slammed down the hatch cover, hopped it, and swung to the wheel. The gale was coming after them with a hollow booming that sent a grim warning ahead. He had only time to cast loose the mainsail and grip the wheel when the blow came. A big wave swept over the stern, slapping against the after part of the cabin. The kick of the wheel flung him across the deck, almost tearing his arms from their sockets; but he clung to it. The flood held back the schooner as though a giant hand from the ocean was clutching her stern, trying to drag her under.

For a moment she wallowed. Then like a howling wolfpack the gale struck her larly; the mainsail split from boom to gaff, licking to leeward; the topmast came crashing down on deck; and the Nancy Lee, freed from man's control, spun off her course under the pull of the headsails and raced for the open sea. Hazard, straining with cracking muscles at the wheel, had a runaway ship on his hands, unmanageable to any man though he had the strength of a dozen wheelmen. Captain Bunker he could count nothing on; the old schooner master was nearly dead from exhaustion now. Hazard summed the wheel hard down, slipped on the lashings to hold it, and ran forward.

There was no racket in the fore-castle as he passed it; but he could imagine the temper of those unruly Jamaica negroes, shut up for twenty-four hours in that dark hole. And he cursed the thick headedness of Skipper Bunker—impairing the lives of his precious passengers through his own stubborn stupidity.

Once forward, he slashed like a maelstrom, bringing the headsails down on the run. He could not haul down the foresail; but he dropped the gaff, reducing the area of the sail by half; hauling in the slack of the sheet ropes at the same time, to bring the schooner beam on into the wind, despite the pounding seas.

With the drag of the headsails off her, the little ship responded immediately, turning her head slowly from the open sea as she rounded more to windward. Her runaway dash slackened, and, with her wheel lashed hard down, Hazard knew, or guessed, that she was making nearly northward, parallel with the Jersey coastline.

He staggered back against the bulwark, dead beat, but jubilant. If he could hold the Nancy Lee on her present course, he stood a bare chance of meeting a ship far out, or making for the southern transatlantic lane. It was the thought of that night watch, the black hours at the kicking wheel of a half wrecked vessel, with a pack of black mutineers trying to break out, that chilled his blood—not for himself, but for the helpless people aboard.

Gritting his teeth with the helplessness of the whole thing, he started aft, and suddenly stopped as if shot. There was a dull rumbling of something below decks,

and he noticed that the hull was lifting to the seas more sluggishly, rolling like a barrel as they struck her quarter. He had counted on a mauling, working to windward; but—

SHE'S taking in water! That spar going overboard opened up a seam, likely."

The discovery appalled him; but he pulled up in a moment. Something of the fierce fire that thrilled him when he faced Big Jem Casco on the beach leaped in his veins—a lust for mastery, determination to force that idle, howling pack forward to work the ship whether they wanted to or not.

He remembered Bunker's pistol and sprang aft. Under his rough handling the old seaman stared at him, only half understanding.

"The gun?" he said wonderingly. "Why, Lard, I'd had them black scoundrels holystoning the deck long ago if the gun was any use. The pistol's empty—never been loaded, so far's I know." He fell back groaning, and Hazard laughed, a barking laugh that did not sound good.

"Just the same, this ship ain't going to the bottom, and I'm going to save Molly!" A rack of handspikes hung inside the rail. It was long odds, four to one; but—His eye caught something tangled in the lee cordage, and he sprang to the side with a cry. Next instant he was over the rail in his own sloop, dismasted and half full of water, but still dragging alongside from the grapple he had thrown into the fore chains. When he climbed back aboard he held his double barreled duck gun in his hand, shaking it aloft in joyous glee.

"Don't tell me there isn't a Providence! She hits you a wallup with one hand and hands out a chunk o' pie with the other! Now I'll make that bunch sit up!"

Dusk was closing in, and he needed light for the work before him. He dared not think of his desperate plan; but he was going through with it!

"One thing certain, if those fellows should break out in the night they'll get all hands! I've got to be before-hand with them!"

It was the work of a moment to rip the planks off the scuttle, below which the prisoners were howling like demons. He levered away the timbers with the butt of his gun, and sprang back beside the hatch, ready for the rush. The hatch cover slid slowly back, the door flew open, and a giant negro sprang on deck. Behind him Hazard saw other woolly heads and rolling white eyes; but the colossus blocked the hatchway.

THAT'S the ringleader! That's the king of 'em!"

He heard Captain Bunker's deep bellow. But of what happened directly afterward Hurricane Hazard had no distinct memory. He saw that Herculean black form slowly turn on him, the great white eyes blinking in the light after the darkness of the hold. Something red passed before Hazard's eyes. The black arm went up. There was the glitter of a knife and snarling.

Hazard dropped his forgotten gun and sprang in. "Man to man!" he roared. The arm descended with a spat, as Hazard's steel grip closed on the negro's wrist, twisting it as in a vise. The knife clattered to the deck. With a lightning like movement Hazard's right arm shot up, lifting from the hip. The blow caught the giant negro fair on the jaw. Spat—spat—thump! The colossus gasped, swayed, and crashed to the deck. It was over before the other negroes could make a move. Now

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"AND SO THE POOR DOG HAD NONE"

Drawing by P. B. JOHNSON



YOUNG HURRICANE cut short the Captain's creakings, swinging on the half hysterical girl, who was bab-

HURRICANE HAZARD

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they shrank back before the leveled shotgun and the flaming eyes behind it.

"Rope him! Hazard rasped out. 'I've got your lives in my hand, and you're going back to work! Tie up this dog!'"

Obviously the three other merrily members of the crew had no thought of resistance. Before Skipper Bunker, staring wide eyed from the poop, had got his breath, the big mutineer, still unconscious, was tied hand and foot and rolled under the bulwark; two hands were pumping ship as though their lives depended on it; and the third was aft with Hazard struggling down the remnants of the mainsail and clearing away wreckage. The crew had found their master, and Hazard, "beachcomber" as he was, thrilled with the glory of command.

Before darkness fell, the Nancy Lee was bearing up into the heavy seas, with headsails set, foresail reefed and snuggled in, and a patched up rag of mainsail that held the schooner's head well up to the wind. The ensign was hauled down and set right side up. At the pumps the kite mutineers did penance.

"Best do what young skipper tell you! He no man, he berry debil—lick Tiger Tom! The negroes whispered forward, and at Hazard's order they bundled the giant Jamaican into the galley like a sack of flour. Even pig-headed old Captain Bunker, half delirious with the pain of an ankle the size of a hat, allowed himself to be carried below, to the care of the women.

"You're a born shipmaster—what I was in my youth!" the old schooner master said. "I'll not forget ye!"

Hazard shrugged his shoulders. The grip of old Skipper Bunker's fat hand was almost the first friendly touch he had known in his life. Now that the hot blood of battle was cooled, black despondency was creeping on him like a cloud. As he stood straining at the wheel, a soft voice came from the cabin, tremulous and low, Molly singing to Casco's boy. The never ceasing pumps clanked; gnomelike figures flitted the deck, casting fearful white eyes aft. The triumph of power swelled in him. After all, life was before him—he was proved a master of men! As for the future—

ALL night long Hazard stood at the kicking wheel, while the Nancy Lee bore farther and farther into the north, lost in the inky blackness of the Atlantic. Once he passed across the bow of a big steamer; but almost as soon as he made out her lights the racing schooner flitted past and left her far astern. After midnight the wind veered, and he figured from the few vagrant stars that he was running only a few points off the coastline.

It was bitter, killing work; but all through the latter part of the night he held his post, keeping one eye on the shadowy, menacing deck as he scanned the ocean for sign of light-house or light-ship, seeking something to guide him in the pall that enveloped the ocean.

But when dawn broke the Nancy Lee was alone on the tossing sea, her decks awash, and three black forms lying like dead men on the fore hatch. During a lull in the westerly gale he swept the horizon carefully with the glasses. Far ahead he made out a windblown pencil mark of smoke; on each quarter lay an endless waste of salty water, stretching away without a break. But when he slowly swung round and brought the glasses to bear over the stern, Hazard gave a cry of surprise strangely mingled with disappointment.

Less than a mile away a big white motorboat danced on the bosom of the ocean, overhauling him hand over fist. She was filled with men, and one in the bow waved a handkerchief on a boathook.

"That's Sandy Hook's big motorboat, and that's Big Jim Casco in the bow. They must have been following my lights. They got picked up, just like I thought. Most likely landed at Sandy Hook, and hiked out to sea. Bet they didn't expect to get us this side o' Europe—or Davy Jones! We must be 'way up near Long Island."

He lowered the glasses, still watching the oncoming lightboat. In the cabin he heard the women stirring and the chatter of Casco's boy, mingled with the hoarse tones of Skipper Bunker.

There was no use changing the course of the schooner. She was hugging the wind close now. He didn't even rouse the crew. The lightboat would be on top of him in a minute. A turn of the wheel shook the wind out of the sails, and, crouching over it his face buried in his hands, he waited.

IN that moment of listlessness, when the terrible fatigue of the night seized upon him, he lost the trend of events. Rescue

was assured. Whether he dozed or not, he did not know. He had a vague sense of something creeping along the companion-way—something implacable, grim with purpose.

A sudden shock of the wheel roused him. He staggered, falling on his knee to the deck. A woman's anguished scream pierced his brain, that and the shouting of men's voices. It all happened together. He saw Molly's terrified face in the hatchway; he saw big Casco bound inboard from the main chains. But over him, as he turned, puzzled, another huge form loomed up, deadly threatening. It was the giant mutineer, grinning faced, with familiar uplifted knife.

There was no chance for Hazard to deal that terrible right hand blow now. Why not let him do it? It was better so, maybe. It was unfair, after all he had gone through; but— But Hurricane Hazard was not one to take death cringing. He saw the cruel eyes flash warning, and he saw the blow coming. As it fell, he sprang in from his knees, clutching the negro round the waist. The blow fell. Specks and flashes danced before his eyes—the sound of a great hell tolled in his head. As the negro rose, shaking himself free to face the boarding party, Hazard fell over on the deck, a defiant cry choking in his throat.

CLOSE squeak, I call it, that crack on the head," the Sandy Hook Captain said. "If you hadn't gone at him, the fellow would have got you in the back instead of a glancing blow. Reckon he never saw us coming. By George! but you've had a lively run in Bunker's old schooner, from looks of things, Lad!"

Dazed and faint, Hazard found himself sitting on the hatch, answering dully the eager questions of the Life men. They had chased him out to sea all night, they said, after Casco and his crew reached the Hook, picked up by the Morgan liner Apache. Casco would not quit. By George! he ought to have salvage, for what he done!

Listlessly he answered them. There was nothing more for him to do now. His work was over. The life savers had taken charge. The Nancy Lee was racking homeward down coast.

He did not care how soon they made port—sooner the better. He heard the voices in the cabin, happy voices.—Casco and his wife and boy—and Molly. They naturally had no time to bother with "beachcombers."

Just then from below came Skipper Bunker's hoarse voice. "Save the ship and saved all hands, that's what the lad did! It was worth the price to see him bowl over that black rascal—fell down like the walls of Jericho, the fellow did! You and your Life Service! Half owner of this ship Hurricane Hazard is, and skipper to boot, from last night! Glory be! I have no kith or kin!"

An appreciative chuckle ran round the deck. The Sandy Hook Captain patted Hazard's shoulder by way of congratulation. But Hazard's eyes were fixed on a slim girl's figure, clinging to Big Jim Casco's arm, as the life Captain crossed the deck to him.

Captain Casco of Ships Bottom was not a man of words—not today, anyway. But his hand was out, and Hazard, flushing hot and going white, grasped it, his eyes on the girl's.

"So you'd join the Life, would you, Lad?" Casco said, sweeping away the past in one broad smile. "I for one say aye! We want men like you. But you heard Bunker, and he's a man of his word, if he is a wooden-headed crew driver."

Hazard's eyes still held to the girl, a question in them. Casco guessed it, and his booming laugh rang out.

"You'd do the Life proud; but women do like a man o' property—and Molly here takes naturally to shipping—with the right skipper. Eh, Girl?"

Miss Molly laughed too, and blushed, as she properly should, and Hurricane laughed joyously, and the Sandy Hook Captain laughed, backed up by the Sandy and Ships Bottom crews. Life or sea—let the girl decide! And without possibility of adverse fate, Hazard knew that Molly's decision would be binding—in more ways than one.

SOME IMPROVEMENT

I UNDERSTAND," said a New Yorker to his guest from Boston, "that you have so high an opinion of your city that you think Heaven must be something like Boston."

"Well," was the sober reply, given with a shrug of the shoulders, "I believe I did say that sometime ago; but, you know, Boston has improved a great deal in the last few years."



Baby Du Fais,
Cleveland, O.

Wean Your Baby Now, Before the Summer Heat

It is dangerous to wean a baby in summer and it is even more dangerous to half starve it even if the mother's milk is insufficient. The safest and surest way is to wean your baby now, in the spring, so that when the summer heat comes, both you and the baby will be ready to meet it.

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